

# Birmingham City University

## English Proficiency Test

# Reading

- Do not open this booklet before the examiner tells you to.
- Read the instructions carefully.
- Total time available: 60 minutes. No extra time is available for transferring answers to the answer sheet.
- Write in pen or pencil.

Name: .....

ID Number: .....

Test Centre: .....

Date: .....

Birmingham City University  
International Centre for English



BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University

## Reading Passage 1

You should spend about **20 minutes** on questions **1 - 13**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

### From butterfly to caterpillar: How children grow up

**A** In the past 30 years, advances in scientific research have transformed our understanding of babies and young children. It has been discovered that babies know more and learn more than anybody had ever thought possible, and researchers are now beginning to be able to explain some of the processes that are involved.

**B** New research reveals that the key to understanding human intelligence may be found in watching what humans do as children, rather than by observing adult behaviour. The long, protected period of time that we call childhood may be the starting point for our human capacity for learning and imagination, as well as our ability to change our behaviour according to our environment, and to change our surroundings to meet our needs.

**C** This fundamental link between childhood and intelligence can be found across a wide variety of species, with classic examples seen in birds. In biology, the term 'precocial' refers to species in which the young are relatively mature and mobile from the moment of birth. The opposite developmental strategy is called 'altricial', where the young are born helpless. 'Precocial' birds, such as chickens, become mature much more quickly, have much less flexible behaviour and poor learning abilities. In contrast, 'altricial' birds, such as crows, are immature for an extended period of time. In other words, they have a long 'childhood', and these birds demonstrate learning abilities similar to those of apes. While chickens seem to rely on the very specific abilities that they are born with and that are suitable for one particular environment, such as scratching in the ground for food, crows are much more flexible. For example, crows can learn how to turn an item that they find, such as a piece of wire, into a new tool. New research indicates that this ability to create and learn is a direct result of the lengthy period of time they spend as young birds.

**D** The development of a learning strategy has many advantages because it lets an animal survive in many more environments, and even modify those environments. However, there is one major disadvantage, which is that until learning takes place, these animals are helpless. This has led to a division of roles between the younger and older members of the populations of these species. The young are protected, which gives them time to learn and imagine, and the adults take care of them during this period.

**E** Human beings are the most extreme example of the strategy of extended childhood. We remain dependent on adults for longer than any other species, and we invest especially heavily in our young. Recently, researcher Sarah Blaffer Hardy, who studies humans, monkeys and apes, has suggested that this period of intensive care we receive when we are young may be the reason for our distinctive human capacities for cooperation and altruism (thinking about others before ourselves). By being looked after, we learn how to care.

**F** Our lengthy childhood may also be necessary in order to develop our human intelligence, powers of reasoning and social skills. The link between childhood activities and learning is evident when observing children's typical daily behaviour. Recent studies show that the two types of play that children engage in have different functions in terms of learning. 'Exploratory' play – the desire to push every button and pull every string - helps children to discover how the physical world works. 'Pretend' play – imagining that they are a character in a book or film – helps them to understand all the possible ways that people could be.

**G** In the past, it was claimed that babies and children were merely imperfect adults, but this new research reveals that they are in fact very different from adults. They have equally complex and powerful, but very different, minds, brains and lives, which suit their role. Babies actually have more connections between different parts of their brains than adults. They begin by making many weak connections, and proceed by losing the unused links and strengthening the useful ones. The human prefrontal cortex, which is different from other animals' brains, takes a particularly long time to mature: this part of the brain may not be complete until the mid-twenties. The adult capacities for focus, planning and action that are governed by the prefrontal cortex depend on the long learning that takes place in childhood. In simple terms, babies are brilliant learners, but they are incapable of planning. They are fantastically creative and have incredible imagination, but absolutely no capacity to make their dreams a reality.

**H** The changes in the human brain from immaturity to adulthood are much more intricate than the simple growth that is seen in other species. Babies are like exploratory, bright butterflies, while the adults are caterpillars, moving slowly along narrower paths. Science will not tell us how to make babies smarter - they are already as smart as they could be - but it can help us to understand the importance of childhood and its crucial role in the lengthy and complicated development of the adult brain.

## Questions 1 - 7

Do the following statements agree with the information in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 1 - 7 on your answer sheet, write

**TRUE/ T**                    *if the statement agrees with the information*

**FALSE/ F**                    *if the statement contradicts the information*

**NOT GIVEN/ NG**        *if there is no information on this*

1        Researchers have been studying how babies learn for thirty years.

**Answer** .....

2        Studying childhood behaviour is the only way to understand human intelligence.

**Answer** .....

3        Humans begin to learn how to modify their behaviour to suit their surroundings during the lengthy childhood period.

**Answer** .....

4        Altricial animals are completely incapable of looking after themselves when they are born.

**Answer** .....

5        Chickens are born with the ability to change their behaviour to suit different environments.

**Answer** .....

6        Altricial birds all have the ability to make tools and change their surroundings.

**Answer** .....

7        Altricial animals are helpless because the adults protect them.

**Answer** .....

### Questions 8 - 11

Choose the correct letter **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**. Write the correct letter in boxes **8 - 11** on your answer sheet.

- 8** According to Sarah Blaffer Hardy, what is one of the results of an extended childhood period?
- A** Humans make a deep investment in caring for their young.
  - B** People remain immature for longer than many other animals.
  - C** Adults are more able to work together effectively.
  - D** Children can spend more time learning through playing.
- 9** What does the writer say about childhood activities and learning?
- A** Pretend play enables children to try out different identities.
  - B** Children learn by watching other children playing.
  - C** Exploratory play should be combined with pretend play.
  - D** Manipulating objects is an important aspect of pretend play.
- 10** What does the writer say about the brains of babies and adults?
- A** They are equal in size, but have different abilities.
  - B** They both remove any links in the brain that have no function.
  - C** Adult brains are better at planning because they are poor at imagining.
  - D** Adult brains do not have as many connections as babies' brains.
- 11** According to paragraph H, what does research show us?
- A** That adults move more slowly than children and do not like to explore.
  - B** That the human brain's development process is highly complex.
  - C** That human babies and butterflies develop in similar ways.
  - D** That there are ways to make babies more intelligent.

**Questions 12 - 13**

Which **TWO** of the following statements are mentioned in the passage?

**The statements do not follow the order of the text.**

Choose **TWO** letters from **A - E**. Write the correct letters in boxes **12 - 13** on your answer sheet.

- A** There is a connection between length of childhood and adult ability in a range of animal species.
- B** Crows develop their intelligence by copying the behaviour of apes.
- C** Most animals are born with a natural ability to modify their environment.
- D** Studying the human brain is the only way to observe how human learning develops.
- E** The prefrontal cortex does not fully develop until people are about 25 years old.

Source: Gopnik, A. (2009) From butterfly to caterpillar: How children grow up. *New Scientist*, [online] 4 August. Available at: <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20327191.700-from-butterfly-to-caterpillar-how-children-grow-up.html> [Accessed 16 January 2014]

## Reading Passage 2

You should spend about **20 minutes** on questions **14 - 27**, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

### Mission to Mars

- A** The Mars One Project, founded by Dutch businessman Bas Lansdorp, aims to start a colony of four people on the planet of Mars by 2030. Lansdorp also plans to send another four volunteers on a one-way ticket every 26 months to spend the rest of their lives on the red planet, with no option to return. The entrepreneur believes that the mix of nationalities of the voyagers to Mars will lead to improved communication and collaboration across geographical borders on Earth. His other aim for the landings is to inspire people to believe that anything is possible if you are willing to work hard for it.
- B** Lansdorp recently announced that Lockheed Martin, the same company that builds spaceships for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), is working with Mars One to build a satellite to put into orbit around Mars by 2023. The satellite will enable the space travellers to communicate with and broadcast images to Earth. Edward Coxley from Lockheed said that no major innovations are necessary as the company will develop already existing technical knowledge and machinery for this mission. Starting this work is a strong sign that the project is serious about achieving its aims, but there is no doubt that there are still many difficulties to overcome.
- C** The main issue facing the project seems to be how to finance the mission. Mars One already has some corporate sponsors who pay to promote their product on the project's website, or have their company logo on products and clothes that the astronauts will use in their living quarters. However, it aims to raise the majority of its estimated \$6bn costs by getting one of the main television channels to pay for permission to film the selection process, and a live broadcast of life on Mars.
- D** The second man to walk on the Moon, Buzz Aldrin, thinks that one day people will land on Mars, but he is not sure that the timings given by the Mars One Project are accurate. He says: "I don't think technology has advanced enough yet to get four people to Mars by 2030." According to Aldrin, while private corporations do have an important role to play in space exploration, international cooperation is essential for something as monumental and significant as sending people to Mars.
- E** Meanwhile, finding people to go on the trip has not been difficult; so far 200,000 volunteers have applied to go. From these initial applicants, they have chosen just 1058 candidates, who will take part in a selection process that will be shown on television in 2019 and 2020 to find the first 40 people to send to Mars. It is not yet known what these applicants (who include the three below) will have to do in order to be successful, but it will probably be very interesting television.
- F** Maggie Lieu, 23, is doing a PhD with the Astrophysics and Space Research Group in Birmingham, UK. She wants to go to Mars because she thinks it will have a major

impact on the whole world, and she will benefit from working with people from other countries. Most importantly for Maggie, she believes that by going to Mars she will become a better scientist than she could ever hope to be on Earth. Ms Lieu hopes that this mission will inspire younger generations to become interested in science. She says that the project is feasible, but that it will be difficult and they need to stick to a strict schedule. Her only criticism of the project is that it seems to be minimising the scientific importance by promoting it as a TV programme, which she thinks is a waste of resources. However, she says that once she is on Mars she will ignore the cameras and concentrate on her own science and research.

- G** Ryan Macdonald, 20, is a physics student at Oxford University. He believes that he can achieve more on Mars than he could on Earth. He says that the Moon landings inspired a generation of scientists and engineers on Earth to develop the computers, smartphones and other technology that have improved our lives. He thinks that these Mars landings could inspire the next generation of technology on Earth. Ryan believes that his age is an advantage because his mind is young and fresh, and he has many years of life left to contribute to the project. He thinks he will live longer on Mars than he would on Earth because the diet of the people who go and the air they breathe are going to be strictly controlled. He would miss tea the most, and says he wants to find a way to grow it on Mars.
- H** Alison Rigby, 33, is a scientist from London. She believes that the project will enable her to do a more interesting and in-depth study of human behaviour in extreme conditions than would be possible on Earth. She thinks she is suitable for the project because she is a trained scientist, and she is naturally curious and creative. If Alison goes, she says that she will miss the variety of food that is available at home. On Mars, the diet will consist of fresh produce that the colonists grow, insects and vitamin supplements.



### Questions 14 - 21

Complete the sentences below. Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **14 – 21** on your answer sheet.

- 14** The deadline for the first arrivals on Mars is .....
- 15** There will be a gap of ..... between each trip.
- 16** International relations will be ..... as a result of the mission.
- 17** Lockheed Martin is going to collaborate with Mars One on the construction of a .....
- 18** Building the equipment is a ..... of Lansdorp's commitment to the goals of the project.
- 19** The main source of funding for the project will be a .....
- 20** Aldrin believes that the project is only possible if there is .....
- 21** The initial forty travellers will be chosen during a televised .....

### Questions 22 – 23

Which **TWO** of the following statements are mentioned in paragraphs **A – E**?

**The statements do not follow the order of the text.**

Choose **TWO** numbers from **i – v**. Write the correct letters in boxes **22 – 23** on your answer sheet.

- i** The Mars One Project is Bas Lansdorp's only business.
- ii** The development of new technology on Earth is only possible through space exploration.
- iii** Lockheed Martin will not need to invent new technology for the project.
- iv** Online advertising will provide some of the funding.
- v** The live broadcast from Mars will be broadcast in every country on Earth.

**Questions 24 - 27**

Look at the following list of people. Match each statement **24 - 27** with the correct person **A – E**. You will **NOT** use all of the letters. Write your answers in boxes **24 - 27** on your answer sheet.

**The statements do not follow the order of the text.**

- A** Maggie Lieu
- B** Bas Lansdorp
- C** Alison Rigby
- D** Buzz Aldrin
- E** Ryan Macdonald

**24** The current timetable is not feasible and needs to be adjusted.

**Answer .....**

**25** The mission will advance scientific and technical knowledge on earth.

**Answer .....**

**26** It will be possible to do detailed research into human psychology.

**Answer .....**

**27** Remaining on Earth will mean that there are fewer possibilities for professional development.

**Answer .....**

### Reading Passage 3

You should spend about **20 minutes** on questions **28–40**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.

#### **Forget crispy duck: Regional Chinese food is taking over Britain**

Kai Wang, 26, is a media professional who came to the UK from Beijing in 2008, first to study and then to work. Wang says, "When I arrived in London I thought I was really going to miss Beijing food. I love traditional Beijing cuisine, but also the spicy dishes that have become popular in recent years from regions such as Sichuan, Hunan and Hubei. When I came to the UK, the Chinese food here all seemed to be Cantonese style, which is too sweet, light and delicate for Beijing tastes. Cantonese immigrants who arrived decades ago brought Hong Kong flavours adapted to western tastes to the UK, but more and more authentic Chinese regional restaurants have opened in the past few years, not just in Chinatown but all over the city."

In the mid-1990s, a restaurant called Baguo Buyi opened in the Sichuanese capital, Chengdu. The chef created a modern version of traditional Sichuan cooking and started a nationwide trend for Sichuanese flavours. Following this, Hunanese food and the nutritious and filling dishes of the Dongbei region enjoyed a moment of fame in Chinese culinary fashion. More recent Chinese arrivals to the UK, who include not only students but also business-people and tourists, are just as likely to come from Fujian, Shanghai or Liaoning as the Cantonese south of China, which means that Chinese restaurateurs no longer need to adapt their tastes to an old stereotype of Anglo-Cantonese (a mix of British and Cantonese) food.

Many establishments, including Liao Wei Feng in Bethnal Green and Local Friends in Golders Green, have menus divided into two sections. They have one list of the usual Anglo-Cantonese dishes, including lemon chicken and crispy duck, and another offering some of the most authentic Hunanese food available in the capital, with choices such as "stir-fried fragrant and hot fish" and "steamed belly pork, Chairman Mao-style". Non-meat eaters particularly like the range of traditional Hunanese options that Local Friends offers, such as kailan (Chinese greens) in garlic sauce.

Hunanese cuisine is not the only type of food being gradually introduced into British restaurant culture. Large numbers of Fujianese immigrants have joined the catering trade, like the Cantonese migrants did years ago. Fujian province lies on the south-eastern Chinese coast, and is known for its delicate soups, appetising street snacks and flavoursome oysters and other shellfish and fish found in the ocean. Currently, there is only one Fujianese restaurant in London, Fuzhou in Gerrard Street, which is particularly well-known for its fishballs stuffed with minced pork, and cabbage-and-clam soup with slippery rice pasta.

Shanghainese food has traditionally been hard to find in Britain, even though the region is particularly famous for its food in China. The city itself is best known for the xiao long bao "soup dumpling", but the wider region is the source of delicious river food such as fish, crab, eel and shrimp, and famous dishes including "beggar's chicken" and "dongpo pork". In London, consultant chef Zhang Chichang creates elegant Shanghainese dishes at the Bright

Courtyard Club in Baker Street. New Quebec Street is the location for The Red Sun restaurant, which is usually full of diners enjoying simple, home-cooked stir-fries such as green soya beans with pork and pickled greens, despite the restaurant's old-fashioned and worn out interior. This is a sure sign that the food is particularly good.

Sichuan and Hunan are China's best-known spice regions, but chillies are most widely used in Guizhou province. Maotai Kitchen in Soho, London offers traditional Guizhou food. The chef, Zhu Shixiu, grew up in the beautiful hills near the Guizhou-Hunan border, and, after years of working in Cantonese restaurants, is now allowed to put anything he likes on the menu. Many of his home-cooked style dishes share the sour-hot characteristic of Hunanese cooking, but the interesting lemongrass flavour in some of them comes from litsea oil (mu jiang you), a Chinese medicine used to improve the flavour of food in Guizhou and a few other regions.

While there has been a growth in the availability of regional cuisines in the capital, only Sichuanese cuisine has really become known in cities all over the country – a sign, perhaps, of its decade-long status as China's trendiest style of cooking. Red N Hot has branches in Manchester and Birmingham, while Red Chilli has expanded from Manchester into Leeds and York. My Sichuan has taken over the old school house at Gloucester Green, Oxford, where Zhou Jun from Chengdu runs a kitchen offering all the classic Sichuanese specialities.

As China's changing culinary fashions continue to create excitement in the restaurant scene in London, the range of regional flavours is likely to increase and spread across the country. In the meantime, Sichuanese cuisine has already completely changed the face of Chinese food in many parts of Britain. Now it is possible to try authentic Chinese food in many UK cities.

### Questions 28 - 35

Look at the following list of restaurants and regions. Match each statement **28 - 35** with the correct restaurant or region **A - K**. You will **NOT** use all of the letters. Write your answers in boxes **28 - 35** on your answer sheet.

**The statements do not follow the order of the text.**

#### Restaurants:

- A Bago Buyi
- B Local Friends
- C Fuzhuo
- D Bright Courtyard Club
- E The Red Sun
- F Maotai Kitchen

#### Regions:

- G Sichuan
- H Hunan
- I Fujian
- J Guizhou
- K Hubei

**28** This restaurant serves fish dishes from south-east China.

**Answer .....**

**29** This restaurant first made Sichuanese food fashionable in China.

**Answer .....**

**30** This region serves the spiciest dishes.

**Answer .....**

**31** This London restaurant serves sophisticated Shanghainese food.

**Answer .....**

**32** This restaurant serves food that is particularly suitable for vegetarians.

**Answer .....**

**33** This is the only Chinese region that has its cuisine available in major cities throughout the UK.

**Answer .....**

**34** This region's cuisine became trendy after that of Sichuan.

**Answer .....**

**35** This restaurant serves food from Guizhou.

**Answer .....**

### Questions 36 – 40

Do the following statements agree with the information in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes **36 - 40** on your answer sheet, write

**TRUE/ T**                      *if the statement agrees with the information*

**FALSE/ F**                     *if the statement contradicts the information*

**NOT GIVEN/ NG**         *if there is no information on this*

**36**     Most current Chinese immigrants to the UK are from the Cantonese south of China.

**Answer** .....

**37**     The Lemon Chicken served in Liao Wei Feng is an authentic Cantonese dish.

**Answer** .....

**38**     Many people moving to the UK from Fujian are working in Cantonese restaurants.

**Answer** .....

**39**     The Red Sun restaurant is popular because of its food and its cosy interior.

**Answer** .....

**40**     Zhu Shixiu is famous for adding a traditional medicinal ingredient to all of his dishes.

**Answer** .....

**THAT IS THE END OF THE TEST.**

**NOW TRANSFER YOUR ANSWERS TO THE ANSWER SHEET.**